

LETTER OF FAITH

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

DECEMBER 2023 / JANUARY 2024

MINISTERS: ALL THE PEOPLE OF FAITH

Advent Days of Light & Darkness

The dark days of December are upon us. Here in the northern hemisphere, our days are the shortest they will be during the year. I find myself wanting to light candles as we eat supper. I remind myself that 6:30 pm is too early to go to bed, even if the sky tells me differently.

Jesus, as the light of the world, is a welcome image in these dark days of Advent. On Sunday mornings, we will gather around this theme. As we light our Advent Candles in worship, we will Wait, Watch, Prepare, and Praise the Light of Jesus! My prayer is that in the midst of this troubled world, our gatherings on Sundays will bear witness to the good news of Jesus. “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” John 1:9 (NIV)

Yet, even as I hold to the truth that Jesus is the Light of the World, I trust that Jesus is also with us in the darkness. In her book “Learning to Walk in the Dark” Barbara Brown Taylor, explores the redeeming qualities of the dark. She writes,

“Darkness is shorthand for anything that scared me – either because I am sure that I do not have the resources to survive it or because I do not want to find out. If I had my way, I would eliminate everything from chronic back pain to the fear of the devil from my life and the lives of those I love. At least I think I would. The problem is this: when, despite all my best efforts, the lights have gone off in my life, plunging me into the kind of darkness that turns my knees to water, I have not died. The monsters have not dragged me out of bed and taken me back into their lair. Instead, I have learned things in the dark that I could never have learned in the light, things that have saved my life over and over again, so that there is really only one logical conclusion. I need darkness as much as I need light.”

So, in addition to celebrating that Jesus is the Light of the World, this Advent I’m inviting us to ponder how Jesus meets us in the darkness. Watch for a family advent calendar, daily radio & video devotions, and a Soup & Group Advent Gathering on Wednesdays in December. In these ways, we will explore God’s presence in both light & darkness.

May Jesus Christ come to you anew in these Advent days of waiting.
Grace and peace,
Pastor Emmy

Faith Lutheran Church

108 West Eighth Street

Morris, MN 56267

320-589-2970

www.faithlutheranmorris.org

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Pianist Rita Lambert

Director of Music John Kleinwolterink

Website Anne Mitteness

Custodians Cassie & Ryan Snyder

Faith Lutheran Mission Statement:

*“Faith Lutheran is a
community of believers
living out our faith in
daily life.”*

Council Members:

Zach Arnold

Vicky Dosdall

Molly Fluegel

Brent Gausman

Chris Hopkins

Lynnae Lina—President

Tom Loew

Jenny Maras—Secretary

Eric Meichsner

Mike Nordquist—Vice President

Nancy Olson

Liz Spohr—Treasurer



December WORSHIP

- Dec 3 – 9:00 am Worship - WAIT for the Light!
- Dec 10 – 9:00 am Worship - WATCH for the Light!
- Dec 17 – 9:00 am Worship - PREPARE for the Light!
11:00 am Sunday School Christmas Program, followed by lunch
- Dec 24 – 9:00 am Worship – PRAISE the Light!
2:00 & 4:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship – CELEBRATE THE LIGHT!
- Dec 31 – 9:00 am Worship - New beginnings on New Year's Eve

Advent Calendar

Stop at church and pick up an Advent Calendar. They are on the Welcome Center.



Star Sunday is coming...

You won't want to miss worship on Sunday, January 7th. As we celebrate the baptism of Jesus, you'll also be given the gift of a "star" word for the year. This word can serve as a guide and inspiration in your walk with Jesus in 2024.

Sunday, December 24th Worship Schedule

9:00am 4th Sunday of Advent

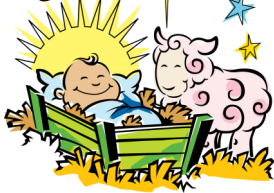
Christmas Eve Worship Services
with Holy Communion will be at

2:00pm

4:00pm



*Sunday
School
Program*



Sunday School
Christmas Program
Sunday, December
17th at 11:00am

Followed by Lunch in the Fellowship Hall

All are Welcome and Invited to attend!

The Annual Meeting will be **Sunday, January 28th at 10:10**. If we need to postpone because of bad weather we will then have the meeting on Sunday, February 4th.

Plan to attend.





Cookie Factory & Holiday Expo

DECEMBER
9
9 AM TO 12 NOON

*Get your Christmas Goodies
and Shop More than a Dozen
Area Vendors*

Faith Lutheran Church
108 West 8th Street • Morris

Caramel Rolls Served



Cookie Factory Donations

**Reminder—Please donate
items for the Cookie Factory**

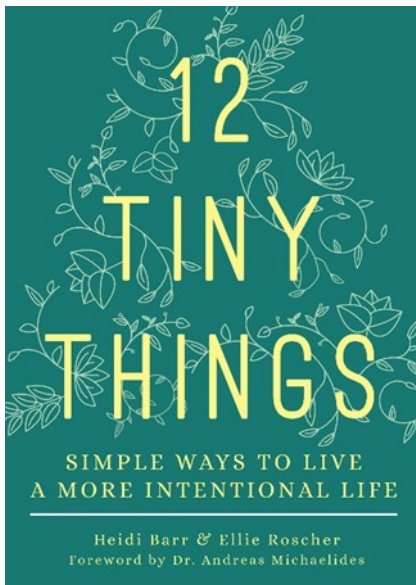
Items may be dropped off
Friday all day (December
8th) and Saturday morning
(December 9th) before
8:30am



THANK YOU

YOUR PRAYERS NEEDED

- Pray for Dr. Stephen and Jodi Swanson and their children who are serving in Tanzania.
- Pray for our ongoing ministry as we join with our brothers and sisters in ministry from South Africa. Pray for the churches of the South Eastern Diocese of South Africa.



Join Pastor Emmy in an exploration of the book “12 Tiny Things: Simple Ways to Live a More Intentional Life” by Heidi Barr & Ellie Roscher. Each month, we will explore one chapter from the book, inviting us to take tiny action for growth and renewal in the possibilities God has for us. To start, we will meet the First Sunday of the month from 10:10-11:00 am in Room 14 (off the fellowship hall)

January 7 – Chapter One: Space
 February 4 – Chapter Two: Work
 March 3 – Chapter Three: Spirituality
 April 7 – Chapter Four: Food

Though reading each chapter is not required, having done so will enhance our discuss.

The book is available through Broadleafbooks.com, Amazon, or Barnes & Noble.



Advent SOUP & A GROUP

Wednesday, December 6, 13, & 20
Noon in the Faith Lutheran Fellowship
Hall

We'll share lunch and explore holy images
of light & darkness in the Bible.

Pastor Emmy will provide soup & bread
the first week. Volunteers to provide food
for December 13 & 20 are appreciated.

Faith Lutheran Church

2023 Budget for Mission \$317,156.22

October 2023

Year to Date Expense \$248,526.74

Year to Date Income \$215,875.89

Difference -\$32,650.85



Give online

2024 ELCA Youth Gathering

CREATED

TO BE MYLE
the table Young Adult Gathering

Six youth and 3 adults from our congregation will be attending the ELCA Youth Gathering in July 2024 in New Orleans. Thank you for your generous response to the "That's My Pan" Fundraiser and Pizza

Ranch Impact Night. More opportunities to support this life-changing experience will be coming...

Congregational Transitions

Baptism

November 12 Vincent Eugene Wayne

Parents — Christopher Wayne & Jennifer Lesmeister

November 19 Scarlett Anne Schlieman

Parents—Ben & Kelsey Schlieman



**"For where
your treasure
is, there you
heart will be
also."**

Matthew 6:21

A Word on Stewardship from Pastor Emmy

Jesus says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21) In other words, where we put our money, our hearts follow. If I buy coffee every morning, I wake up thinking about my next cup of coffee. If we invest in an activity for our child, our time and energy will go there, too. Perhaps you can think of examples from your own experience.

As we wrap up the year and prepare to step into a new, I invite you to consider your financial commitment to Faith Lutheran Church in 2024. In the same way that folks make a monthly commitment to a cell phone bill or a streaming service, might you be willing to consider a monthly commitment to the ministry of Faith Lutheran Church. It's been my experience that giving to the church is not only about finances; it is a spiritual matter as well. When we intentionally share a portion of our hard-earned money with the church, we open ourselves to grow in faith and in trust that God is doing good in this world. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Throughout the week, Faith Lutheran Church shares a daily devotion through our local radio station. Radio Devotionals can be heard Monday through Friday on KMRS (1230 AM or 107.7 FM) at 1:05 p.m., KKOK (95.7 FM) at 2:35 p.m. and can be found on the YouTube link on the website. You can help support this ministry that stretches out into our community to share the good news of Jesus. Donations in support of this ongoing ministry are needed. Donate to support a day (\$18), a week (\$90), or a month (\$360).

Gatherings for Widows and Widowers

Please join with others who have experienced the loss of their spouse, partner or significant other for a wonderful time of fellowship and conversation. *Gatherings for Widows and Widowers* will meet for lunch, **12:00 noon, at Old #1 on Tuesday, December 12.** Order and purchase your lunch, and enjoy the company of others.

For questions, please call Pedersen Funeral Home at 589-3220.

Come join us for a Book Club at Faith Lutheran Church on the last Monday of each month at 1:30

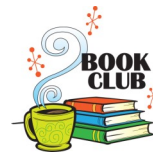
December—No meeting

January 29 “The Water Keeper” by Charles Martin

February 26 “The Five Wishes of Mr. Murray McBride” by Joe Siple

ALL ARE WELCOME

If you are interested in joining the group, please come to Book Club. Maybe you have a book to suggest.



★ ★
**Cocoa & the
Christmas Story**



**A time of Conversation,
Reflection, and Faith for
Young Adults (18-35ish)**

Enjoy a hot cocoa bar & cookies, while we share in conversation about the story of Jesus’ birth.

No church experience necessary.

We will strive to make this an inclusive space.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19 AT 7:00 PM
HELD AT THE FEDERATED CHURCH,
200 S COLUMBIA AVE
(ACROSS FROM MORRIS AREA SCHOOL)**

HOSTED BY THE FEDERATED CHURCH &
FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MORRIS

Opportunities for Giving in December

Once again we will have trees in the narthex area to support different ministries in our area and around the world.

**The Mitten, Hat,
Scarf Tree**—donations have helped keep many people warm.

ELCA Good Gifts—ornaments will be hanging on a tree—they will have different animals and items to help with hunger and transform lives.

Outreach Tree—for needy families in the area.





Element's Schedule: (6th-8th Grades)

Wed, December 6th: Element 6-7:30pm @First Lutheran Church – Christmas Service Projects (adult leaders will communicate with you more details)

Wed, December 13th: Element's Christmas Party 6-7:30pm at Faith Lutheran Church (See attached flier for more information).

Wed, December 20th: No Element – Have a fantastic Christmas!

Wed, December 27th : No Element – Enjoy your winter Break!

Wed, January 3rd: Element 6-7:30pm @First Lutheran Church

Wed, January 10th: Element 6-7:30pm @First Lutheran Church

Wed, January 17th: Element 6-7:30pm @First Lutheran Church

Wed, January 24th: Element 6-7:30pm @First Lutheran Church

Wed, January 31st: Element 6-7:30pm @First Lutheran Church



Sr. High Fusion's Schedule: (9th-12th Grades)

Wed, December 6th: Sr. High Fusion 7-8:30am @First Lutheran Church – Christmas Service Projects (More information to come)

Wed, December 13th: Sr. High Fusion Christmas Party 6:30-8:30pm @First Lutheran Church (details to come)

Friday, December 15th: Fusion Friday Breakfast @7:15-8am @Faith Lutheran Church – Make your own pancakes – Christmas Style!

Wed, December 20th: No Sr. High Fusion – Have a fantastic Christmas!

Wed, December 27th : No Sr. High Fusion - Enjoy your winter Break!

Wed, January 3rd: Sr. High Fusion 7-8:30pm @First Lutheran Church

Wed, January 10th: Sr. High Fusion 7-8:30pm @First Lutheran Church

Wed, January 17th: Sr. High Fusion 7-8:30pm @First Lutheran Church

Friday-Sunday, January 19th-21st: Sr. High Winter Retreat

Wed, January 24th: Sr. High Fusion 7-8:30pm @First Lutheran Church

Friday, January 26th: Fusion Friday Breakfast 7:15-8am @First Lutheran Church

Wed, January 31st: Sr. High Fusion 7-8:30pm @First Lutheran Church



Please check out Fusion's updated website for more information. www.fusion-ministry.com

Join us on social media Facebook@fusion56267 and Instagram@fusion56267



ELEMENT WINTER RETREAT

FEBRUARY 23RD-24TH, 2024

COST: \$70



LUTHER
CREST

Activities

- Snow tubing & Sledding
- Snowball Fights
- Broomball
- Connecting with Friends
- Learning about Jesus



**SIGN UP ON THE FUSION WEBSITE
BY JANUARY 31ST, 2024
WWW.FUSION-MINISTRY.COM**

Fusion Sr. High Winter Wipeout Retreat at Camp Shaminuea

Jan 19-21, 2024

Cost: \$110

Worship & Engaging speakers | Outdoor & Indoor
Winter Activities | cozy cabins | Connecting with Jesus
and each other | Some much more...

Sign up on the Fusion website by Dec. 13th
- Spots are limited!

www.fusion-
ministry.com/events-2-1/sr-high-
winter-wipeout

Christmas Decorating at church on
Friday, December 1st at 8:30am—if
you are available, please plan to come and help—even
for a short time.

Thank You

Decorate the Church



Community Christmas Dinner will again be held
on **Christmas Day at noon** at **First Lutheran
Church, Morris**. Volunteers are needed to help in
all areas. Donations of hams and Christmas
cookies are needed.

Delivery available to shut ins. To volunteer or for a
meal delivery, call Pam at 320-287-2134.

Lutheran Campus Ministry – Garrett Colton, the Campus Community Coordinator for Lutheran Campus Ministries at UMM is working on resuming LCM's weekly dollar dinners, and was looking to see if local congregation members would be interested in volunteering to prepare the dinner each week. The meals started weekly on Nov. 7th, and each Tuesday after that until the end of the Fall semester, resuming when the Spring semester begins. The meals will be served from 5:30PM until 7PM at the Christus House (110 Columbia Ave, Morris MN). Volunteers are able to use the kitchen space in the house to prepare meals if necessary. LCM will also reimburse volunteers for the cost of food/ingredients if provided with receipts, should they wish to be compensated. Meal size should be able to feed around 20-30 people. Those interested in volunteering can contact Garrett at gdcolton99@gmail.com

Radio Broadcast

Faith Lutheran sponsors the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Worship eight times during the year—if you would like to sponsor a radio broadcast in honor or memory of someone, please call the church office. The cost is \$65.00 per time. **THANK YOU**

Annual Reports

Reminder to all ministry groups to have the report for the year in the church office by **December 15** so the Annual Report can be printed for the Annual Meeting. **Thank You**

2023 Financial Giving Statements

They will be mailed in January. If you need your statement early in January, please let me know and I can send it to you earlier in the month.

THANK YOU Connie

MISSION: STITCH! Tuesday Afternoons



Join the group for stitching— at 1:30. Bring your projects; come when you can; stay as long as you can. Every Tuesday. If you have questions, talk to Karen Uphoff. Thanks

Do Days—Tuesday Mornings

Join them on Tuesdays at 9:00—bring a sack lunch. No experience necessary. Come when you can and help make quilts—you do not need to know how to sew.



Items for the Restoration Center at Central Lutheran

They are always in need of men's clothing, socks, underwear and shoes. Also suitcases with wheels that work. Some of their clients are beginning to be able to move into apartments so they can use items such as bedding, towels, silverware, dishes, etc. Thank you for your generosity to this project.

If you are going to the cities and could take a load to Central Lutheran please let us know – Thank You

Pedersen Funeral Home's annual holiday service,

"Remembering" will be held **Sunday, December 3, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.** at the Pedersen Funeral Home in Morris. This service is centered on keeping memories of loved ones alive and helping to endure the pain that the holidays can bring following a death.

There will be a time of reflection and special music during the service, along with a reading of all the names of those who have died that they have served in the last year. This service is open to everyone, even if your family's loss didn't occur within the last year.

Pastor Emmy will lead this year's ecumenical service.

Luther Crest Bible Camp Summer 2024 Camp Registration is open

Registration for Summer Camp 2024 opened on November 1, 2023.

You will be able to register your camper on their website at www.luthercrest.org.

Reminder – Faith Lutheran Church will pay half of the registration fee (on the lowest fee for the camp) for members of Faith – one camp per child per year.



We will celebrate a "Camp Sunday" on January 14. Pastor Maddie from LCBC will be here that Sunday and lead us in worship and she will preach that Sunday.

Faith Lutheran Church Council Highlights

November 12, 2023

Faith Lutheran Mission Statement "Faith Lutheran is a community of believers living out their faith in daily life."

Congregational Theme Verse For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God - not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. *Ephesians 2:8-10*

Members Present: Pastor Emmy, Zach Arnold, Vicky Dosedall, Lynnae Lina, Tom Loew, Eric Meichsner, Mike Nordquist, Nancy Olson, Liz Spohr, Connie Tschetter

Members who were in before/after teaching Sunday School: Brent Gausman, Molly Fluegel

Members Absent: Chris Hopkins, Jenny Maras

Call to Order: Lynnae Lina

Opening Devotion and Prayer: Pastor Emmy

REPORTS

Pastor's Report: Written Report Shared including Affirmation of Baptism, 17 youth attending Jr High Synod Youth Gathering in Willmar; 9 planning to attend the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans this summer; Continue to pray for the ministry of our congregation.

Connie's Report: Written Report Shared - reminder to get items in for the Annual Report

Fusion Youth Update: Fall is going very well for both Element and the Sr High Group. Heather is working on summer trip(s)

The events planned by Faith Lutheran for the two youth gatherings are not done through Fusion because they are ELCA events and Fusion is a inter-denominational youth group

Ministry Reports:

Congregational Life—meeting next Sunday to do a Thanksgiving goodie bag for shut-in

Outreach—Breakfast last week by the Fromm Family with serving assistance from the Outreach Ministry—\$910.00 raised for the Community Food Baskets

Worship & Music— Working on Christmas Eve Worship— Services will be at 9:00am, 2:00pm and 4:00pm on December 24th.

Memorial/Endowment—Memorial approved money to replace the bathroom stools (use less water) in the women's restroom/Endowment - no meeting

Property & Safety—Some work has been done to improve water pressure in the church; looking at electrical and sheetrock work; removal of a pew that was damaged

Education— 3 teachers for each class; working on Christmas program with a meal following the program again this year

Celebrate & Share - the committee is serving the Sundaes today during the fellowship time; planning for Vocation Sunday next week

Women of Faith—Meatball Supper—served 500+ this year; hoping to get the stove installed soon; Cookie Factory with Vendors on December 9th

Secretary Report - MMSP

Treasurer's Report - MMSP

OLD BUSINESS

Facility Improvement Committee When the hallway repair is complete they will be able to continue with the baseboard

Values Pastor Emmy shared a list of Values that have been compiled over the last few months by the Council—discussion on the list: Wide, Open, Welcome; Caring and Sharing; Creating a Joyful Noise; Centered in Jesus

Discussion on the different bullet points

NEW BUSINESS

Nominating Committee: Will meet soon. The members are: Tony Reimers, Mark Torgerson, Mary Asche, Nichole Mahoney, Brian Olson
Council Member terms expiring this year are: Vicky Dosedall, Tom Loew, Eric Meichsner, Liz Spohr

2024 Budget Requests: Reminder to get in budget requests to the Executive Committee soon

Annual Meeting Date: January 28, 2024; back up weather date is February 4

Other Council member had someone comment that the drinking water at the church is bad; this will be added to the Property Committee Wish List

Next Council Meeting: Sunday, December 10, 2023

Adjournment & Lord's Prayer

Respectfully Submitted, Connie Tschetter

Faith Lutheran Church, ELCA
108 West Eighth Street
Morris, MN 56267

PERMIT #130
US POSTAGE
NON-PROFIT ORG
MORRIS, MN 56267

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Christmas Eve Worship
Services will be at 2:00pm
and 4:00pm

Faith Lutheran Church 108 West 8th Street, Morris MN (320)589-2970 www.faithlutheranmorris.org



Our Vision

Faith Lutheran is a community of believers living out their faith in daily life.

Our Mission

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Faith Lutheran Church is a community of believers striving to:

invite and welcome people to faith in Jesus Christ

nurture and equip people with a living faith in response to God's love

send disciples into our prairie communities and beyond in Christ's service

Congregation Theme Verse

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life." Ephesians 2:8-10